

CONCORDIA COUNCIL ON STUDENT LIFE

Minutes of a Meeting held in Room AD-128, Administration Building, Loyola Campus,  
at 5:15 p.m. on January 15, 1979

Present: Prof. F. W. Bedford, Chairman  
Mr. B. Counihan, Dr. E. Enos, Dean M. Flynn, Mr. J. A. Sproule, Mr.  
B. Philip, Ms. J. Richardson, Mr. D. Insleay, Rev. R. Gaudet, S. J.,  
Ms. N. Cullen, Prof. R. Allison, Prof. W. Gilsdorf, Prof. R. Wills,  
Mr. O. El-Awadi, Mr. M. Eson, Ms. A. Grant, Mr. A. Lajoie, Mr. W. Muloin,  
Ms. H. Obermeir, Mr. J. Lacombe, Mr. C. A. Duff, Mrs. N. Cooper, Secretary.

Alternate: Mr. J. Goldner for Mr. F. Denton

Absent: Prof. A. Riding, Prof. J. Macaluso, Mr. A. Mannessy, Ms. N. Marrelli,  
Ms. I. Birnstingl, Ms. M. Eberlin, Mr. P. Sauer, Mr. M. Wiemann,  
Mr. A. Weiner, Mr. R. Sharma.

Guest: Mrs. F. Haffey

Chairman's Remarks

A quorum being present, the Chairman called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. He congratulated Prof. R. Wills on his appointment as Assistant Dean, and reminded Council that at the February meeting it would be necessary to consider the replacement of faculty members whose term of office on CCSL will expire on April 30, 1979. Consideration should also be given he said to the election of a Chairperson for Council and asked members to decide whether they wished to establish a search committee for this purpose or refer the matter to Steering Committee.

Approval of Minutes of Meeting held on December 19, 1978

The following amendment was made by Dean Flynn to item 4.0: The last sentence should read "Dean Flynn reported that the three Sir George Williams student associations represented on Council had obtained approval of the mezzanine lounge project". On MOTION of Mr. Muloin, SECONDED by Father Gaudet, the Minutes of the previous meeting held on December 19, 1978, were APPROVED AS AMENDED.

Reports of Area Directors

Dean Flynn and Mr. Sproule reported that services in their respective departments had resumed after the Christmas break. A report was distributed at the meeting by the Athletics Department. Mr. Counihan distributed a copy of a health services evaluation at Loyola. Ms. Cullen stated that this data had been collected in an effort to evaluate and improve Health Services on the Loyola Campus.

Report of Priorities and Budget Committee

In the absence of Mr. Macaluso, Mr. Insleay reported that the Priorities and Budget Committee would have a recommendation for the next meeting of Council with regard to fees for Continuing Education students. He reported that a letter addressed to the Director of Athletics has been drafted requesting information in connection with a resolution of Council on April 17, 1978 regarding the possibility of phasing out football at Concordia. Mr. Philip has been requested to obtain information from McGill and Bishops regarding the financing of athletics at these universities. Two more committee meetings are scheduled for January to draft

- 2 -

recommendations for Council with respect to priorities. Mr. Macaluso will send a letter to the four area directors requesting information about the number of employees who carry responsibilities outside their immediate area and the percentage of salary and percentage of time spent in the student services area.

Comité interuniversitaire vie étudiante (CIVE)

No report.

Financial Aid Report

The financial aid report prepared by the Dean of Students Office, Loyola, and distributed at the last CCSL meeting was discussed. Mrs. Freda Haffey, Financial Aid Officer at Loyola, was present to answer questions as was Mr. Insleay from the Sir George Williams Campus. In the discussion which ensued the following points emerged:-

- a) the Government usually informs students of the acceptance of a loan application three weeks before the cheque is received by the University.
- b) students were notified by the Government in December that bursaries had been awarded to them. Payment will not, however, be made until the end of January and the end of March.
- c) an emergency loan fund is available on the Loyola Campus. No such fund has been available on the Sir George Williams Campus for the past three years as students have defaulted on loans and the fund is in a deficit position.
- d) Mr. Duff will look into Development Fund monies to see if it is possible to create a new emergency loan fund for the Sir George Williams Campus.

It was MOVED by Mr. Lajoie, SECONDED by Mr. Muloin

"THAT the question of an Emergency Loan Fund be referred to the Steering Committee."

Other Business

There being no Other Business, the Chairman declared a recess until the Rector arrived.

Guest Speaker - Dr. J. W. O'Brien

The meeting reconvened at 6:30 p.m. on the arrival of the Rector. Dr. O'Brien stated that he did not have any obvious message of importance, but would address himself to the role of CCSL as he viewed it, and then reply to questions.

He believed this to be a good point in the history of CCSL to review its purpose and he felt the time had come to consider its mandate: first, to consider, recommend and report to the University on matters concerning student life; and second, to advise the Board of Governors, through the Rector and Vice Rector, on priorities and the budget on which Student Services operate. A good deal of the

discussion and debate leading up to the establishment of CCSL was conditioned by concern over budgets and how the Student Services fee would be established. There have now been two rounds on the budget question and by this time questions should be assuming some kind of pattern and a format for dealing with them should be emerging.

It may now be possible to spend more time on the other aspect of Council's mandate, which is to consider student life at the University. In that sense Council could take its place as one of the three bodies in the University that have an overall concern. The Board of Governors has overall legal responsibility for the University and a particular responsibility for the administrative and financial aspects of the University. Senate is responsible primarily for dealing with the academic aspect. Both Board and Senate are well established in University structures and their powers, authority and ways of operating are known. CCSL, being a relatively new body, does not have its ways of operating and scope of functioning as clearly defined. It is, however, the only body which has a prime responsibility to consider student life in the broad sense of that term, and unless CCSL considers that kind of question it will probably not be considered at the University level. It may come up tangentially in Senate or the Board of Governors, but it is hardly likely to be at the centre of the agenda.

Precisely what items should appear under that heading is difficult to predict. CCSL will make recommendations regarding budget and Student Services fees each year. Apart from that, it is not possible or useful to predict exactly what CCSL will deal with because it will be influenced by what people believe to be important at a particular moment. Items will come up and be considered, or they will not come up, depending on the validity of the membership and the extent to which members bring forward matters which can be considered.

The question then arises as to what action may be taken because, like Senate, CCSL adjourns at the end of each meeting and returns a month later. Senate, itself, does not carry out the decisions it makes, nor does CCSL or the Board. Decisions relating to policy have to be passed on to others to be carried out, reported on, etc. There are things which cannot be acted upon by this body alone, but must be recommended to other bodies. This is fairly common in the University structure. In the division of activities in the University sometimes the place where the matter is discussed, the place where the decision is made and the place where it is carried out are closely related. But very often this is not the case, and nine-tenths of the discussion takes place in an area other than where the final formal decision is made. In reality, the final decision is often just a formality. Dr. O'Brien emphasized the importance of the place where the question is discussed by those with enough detailed knowledge of the situation to come to a reasonable conclusion. This may be a decision or a recommendation but, de facto, many recommendations are close to being decisions.

CCSL, having gone through its formative period, has before it the possibility of becoming an important forum, where people who have a valid and useful input may contribute to the making of valid and useful decisions. Alternatively, CCSL has the possibility of withering into another active but not very productive body that holds meetings and passes resolutions within certain limits, but does not have an impact on life in the University because it does not choose to direct itself to important issues. CCSL's role will be decided, not by Council having long debates

on what it should do, but rather by discerning those issues on which a useful contribution may be made to the University and making useful proposals or recommendations which can be followed through in an appropriate manner. This includes the budget and priority question which appears in the other part of the mandate.

If he had a specific suggestion for CCSL, Dr. O'Brien stated, it would be that the time had arrived when recommendations on priorities in student life, particularly around matters reflected in the budget, must be made. Student Services at Concordia, and the budget that equips them, is close to being an extrapolation of what existed five years ago at Loyola and Sir George Williams because no one has come to grips with the question of priorities. After the merger there was tremendous student demand to have a voice in the priorities of the Student Services area and CCSL was structured for this purpose. CCSL, in turn, then structured a Budget and Priorities Committee to deal with these questions. While it is not Council's responsibility to administer or manage Student Services, it is its responsibility to determine which services are most important, which ones are less important, and could if necessary be discontinued. There may be other services that are useful and which may have to displace some present service.

This kind of thinking has been neglected thus far and Dr. O'Brien stated that he did not believe this could continue for much longer because of financial implications over the next five years and the manner in which Student Services are financed. Inflation on the one hand and declining enrolment on the other will force certain decisions because, as Council has been previously informed, it takes something like eighteen months from the time decisions are made, in the sense of deciding priorities, to implement them at the operating level. Student Services are not presently in any kind of financial crisis the Rector declared, and even though next year things may turn out to be livable, it is necessary to look eighteen months ahead in University administration and decisions are required on the question of how Student Services should evolve. It is possible to have an optimistic plan and a pessimistic plan in the hope that the optimistic plan works out. But the University must have some kind of plan and if CCSL does not begin to produce some policy direction by which the University can steer in the next five year period, the University will have to take on the task of doing that kind of analysis and provide a plan. Another five years cannot be spent simply extrapolating forward the status quo without relating to the financial implications of a very rapidly rising Student Services fee. With inflation and the sources of revenue being what they are, and the attitude of people toward paying fees being what it is, this does not seem to be a viable alternative for the next five years, said the Rector.

The question of priorities in the sense of budget and priorities and the question of the role and purpose of student life in the other part of the mandate are closely related. The word "priorities" is probably the connecting link because it is impossible to talk about priorities without at the same time having some view as to the nature of student life and the kind of Student Services which are more or less important in order to provide that. Dr. O'Brien stated that, while he was aware that deliberating bodies are not noted for rapid decision making, it was the hope of the University that it would receive from CCSL something more specific and rather more thought out than the annual recommendation that the Student Services fee be not increased.

Replying to a question from Mr. Lajoie, the Rector stated that there are three levels at which one can consider student life, the first being those aspects affected by services provided by Student Services. The second level would comprise activities and services in the University, such as the cafeteria, which are not part of Student Services and not Academic. The third level would concern the academic life at the University. It is possible for members of CCSL to have discussions and take decisions regarding the first level because it has members with the necessary detailed information and knowledge. The other levels would require that experts with a more informed opinion be asked to speak at Council and then constructive recommendations made to the appropriate bodies.

Mr. Duff underlined the importance of committee structure on CCSL, stating that it must be in committees that discussions take place, and the appointment of representatives to committees should be considered very carefully.

In answer to a question from Dean Flynn regarding enrolment figures, the Rector stated that he believed that this year's enrolment would be the highest.

Prof. Bedford thanked the speaker for his time and his straightforward message.

The meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.